

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00017 242158Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 EB-08 /067 W
-----124618 242201Z /66

P 242030Z JAN 78

FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1226
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY
AMCONSUL TORONTO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CA

SUBJECT: MORIN TO PRESENT SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION FORMULA
TO PQ CABINET

1. IN RECENT INTERVIEW WITH MONTREAL'S LE DEVOIR, MINISTER OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS CLAUDE MORIN REVEALED THAT HE WILL SUBMIT A CONCRETE "SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION" PROPOSAL TO THE PROVINCIAL CABINET AT A CLOSED MEETING JANUARY 27-28. THE CABINET WILL AT THE SAME TIME CONSIDER A SCHEDULE OF EVENTS LEADING TO THE REFERENDUM, WHICH ACCORDING TO MOST OBSERVERS WILL BE HELD IN THE SPRING OF 1979.

2. MORIN REFUSED TO GO INTO ANY DETAIL REGARDING THE NATURE OF THE PROPOSAL HE WILL MAKE. A TASK FORCE UNDER DEPUTY MINISTER BERNARD BONIN, A CAREER CIVIL SERVANT, HAS BEEN CONSIDERING FOUR BROAD PROPOSALS (SEE 1977 QUEBEC 0307) BUT WE HAVE OF YET NO INDICATION WHICH OPTION OR COMBINATION OF OPTIONS HAS BEEN SELECTED. MORIN ALSO CONTINUED HIS ON-GOING CAT AND MOUSE GAME WITH OTTAWA REGARDING POSSIBLE ELECTION AND REFERENDUM DATES. REACTING TO PRIME MIN-
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ISTER TRUDEAU'S RECENT SUGGESTION THAT HE MIGHT HOLD OFF FEDERAL ELECTIONS UNTIL AFTER QUEBEC'S REFERENDUM VOTE, MORIN AFFIRMED THAT THE REFERENDUM WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL AFTER FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

3. COMMENT: THERE IS SPECULATION HERE THAT MORIN FAVORS A BROAD ASSOCIATION WITH CANADA ON ECONOMIC MATTERS, IN

PARTICULAR COMMON TARIFFS, A COMMON CURRENCY, AND CLOSE COOPERATION ON FISCAL MATTERS. THIS POSITION IS CONSIDERABLY MORE MODERATE, WE SUSPECT, THAN THAT OF OTHER PQ CABINET MEMBERS AND IS LIKELY TO BE THE SUBJECT OF HOT DEBATE AT TOP LEVELS OF THE PARTY OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE IN A POSITION TO ANNOUNCE THE PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF THE SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION PLAN BEFORE LATE APRIL OR MAY, BY WHICH TIME THE PROPOSED REFERENDUM LAW WILL HAVE BEEN PASSED AND THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN CAN BEGIN IN EARNEST. THIS WILL ALSO COINCIDE, OF COURSE, WITH WHAT MAY WELL BE THE OPENING OF THE FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, WHICH WILL PRESUMABLY NOT START UNTIL AFTER THE PROVINCIAL LIBERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP CONVENTION IN MIS-APRIL. BOSWELL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SOVEREIGNTY, LEGISLATIVE BILLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978QUEBEC00017
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780036-0384
Format: TEL
From: QUEBEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780129/aaaaaybk.tel
Line Count: 76
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c7e3a1e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3723212
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MORIN TO PRESENT SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION FORMULA TO PQ CABINET
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CA, (MORIN, CLAUDE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c7e3a1e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014